

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A communication system in which an image forming  
apparatus capable of forming images and a countermeasure  
specifying computer, which is capable of specifying a  
5 countermeasure when a specific event has occurred in the  
image forming apparatus, are capable of being connected  
to each other via a communication network, wherein said  
image forming apparatus includes:

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storage means for storing identifying information  
10 which identifies a countermeasure specifying computer  
that is capable of specifying a countermeasure when the  
specific event has occurred;

sending means for sending specific-event  
information concerning the specific event to the  
15 countermeasure specifying computer that corresponds to  
the identifying information of the countermeasure  
specifying computer stored by said storage means, the  
specific-event information being sent when the specific  
event has occurred; and

20 answer display means for receiving and displaying  
an answer from said countermeasure specifying computer  
in response to the specific-event information sent by  
said sending means; and

said countermeasure specifying computer includes  
25 specifying means for analyzing the specific-event  
information from said image forming apparatus and

specifying an answer.

2. The system according to claim 1, wherein said image forming apparatus further includes:

a printer for printing out input information; and

5 a printer control computer connected to said printer.

3. The system according to claim 1, wherein said printer control computer has countermeasure display means for analyzing the nature of a problem autonomously  
10 and displaying a countermeasure in a case where the problem can be eliminated by a simple operation performed by the operator.

4. The system according to claim 1, wherein the specific event is a printer problem, said storage means  
15 is provided in the printer, and said sending means and said answer display means are provided in said printer control computer.

5. The system according to claim 4, wherein said printer control computer has countermeasure display  
20 means for analyzing the nature of a problem autonomously and displaying a countermeasure in a case where the problem can be eliminated by a simple operation performed by the operator.

6. The system according to claim 1, wherein said  
25 countermeasure specifying computer is a service depot computer.

7 ~~The system according to claim 1, wherein said~~  
countermeasure specifying computer is a service depot  
computer if the problem is one requiring maintenance by  
a serviceman and a customer support computer if the  
5 problem is one capable of being eliminated by operator  
endeavor without requiring assistance of a serviceman.

8. The system according to claim 1, wherein said  
communication network is the Internet communication  
network, and the identifying information of said  
10 countermeasure specifying computer is an Internet mail  
address.

9. The system according to claim 1, wherein a plurality  
of image forming apparatus are connected to the  
countermeasure specifying computer.

15 10. A method of dealing with problems in a  
communication system in which an image forming apparatus  
capable of forming images and a countermeasure  
specifying computer, which is capable of specifying a  
countermeasure when a problem has occurred in the image  
20 forming apparatus, are capable of being connected to  
each other via a communication network, wherein:

25 said image forming apparatus stores identifying  
information which identifies a countermeasure specifying  
computer that is capable of specifying a countermeasure  
when the problem has occurred, sends problem information  
concerning the problem to the countermeasure specifying

~~computer that corresponds to the stored identifying~~  
information of the countermeasure specifying computer  
when the problem has occurred, and receives and displays  
an answer from said countermeasure specifying computer

5 in response to the sent problem information; and

said countermeasure specifying computer analyzes  
the problem information from said image forming  
apparatus and sends back an answer.

11. The method according to claim 10, wherein said  
10 image forming apparatus includes:

a printer for printing out input information; and

a printer control computer connected to said  
printer.

12. The method according to claim 11, wherein said  
15 printer control computer analyzes the nature of a  
problem autonomously and displays a countermeasure in a  
case where the problem can be eliminated by a simple  
operation performed by the operator.

13. The method according to claim 10, wherein said  
20 countermeasure specifying computer is a service depot  
computer.

14. The method according to claim 10, wherein said  
countermeasure specifying computer is a service depot  
computer if the problem is one requiring maintenance by  
25 a serviceman and a customer support computer if the  
problem is one capable of being eliminated by operator

endeavor without requiring assistance of a serviceman.

15. The method according to claim 10, wherein said communication network is the Internet communication network, and the identifying information of said countermeasure specifying computer is an Internet mail address.

16. The method according to claim 10, wherein a plurality of image forming apparatus are connected to the countermeasure specifying computer.

10 17. A computer program sequence in a communication system in which an image forming apparatus capable of forming images and a countermeasure specifying computer, which is capable of specifying a countermeasure when a specific event has occurred in the image forming apparatus, are capable of being connected to each other via a communication network, wherein the program sequence implements the following steps in said image forming apparatus:

20 a storage step of storing identifying information which identifies a countermeasure specifying computer that is capable of specifying a countermeasure when the specific event has occurred;

25 a sending step of sending specific-event information concerning the specific event to the countermeasure specifying computer that corresponds to the identifying information of the countermeasure

~~specifying computer stored at said storage step, the  
specific-event information being sent when the specific  
event has occurred; and~~

an answer display step of receiving and displaying  
5 an answer from said countermeasure specifying computer  
in response to the specific-event information sent at  
said sending step;

and implements the following step in said  
countermeasure specifying computer:

10 a specifying step of analyzing the specific-event  
information from said image forming apparatus and  
specifying an answer.

18. A computer program sequence in a communication  
system in which an image forming apparatus capable of  
15 forming images and a countermeasure specifying computer,  
which is capable of specifying a countermeasure when a  
problem has occurred in the image forming apparatus, are  
capable of being connected to each other via a  
communication network, wherein the program sequence  
20 implements the following step in said image forming  
apparatus:

a step of storing identifying information which  
identifies a countermeasure specifying computer that is  
capable of specifying a countermeasure when the problem  
25 has occurred, sending problem information concerning the  
problem to the countermeasure specifying computer that

corresponds to the stored identifying information of the  
countermeasure specifying computer when the problem has  
occurred, and receiving and displaying an answer from  
said countermeasure specifying computer in response to  
5 the sent problem information;

and implements the following step in said  
countermeasure specifying computer:

a step of analyzing the problem information from  
said image forming apparatus and sending back an answer.

10 19. A computer-readable storage medium storing the  
computer program sequence described in claim 17.

20. A computer-readable storage medium storing the  
computer program sequence described in claim 18.

New Claims:

15 21. The system according to claim 1, wherein the  
specifying information includes a plurality of Internet  
addresses corresponding to types of problems.

22. The method according to claim 10, wherein the  
specifying information includes a plurality of Internet  
20 addresses corresponding to types of problems.

23. A peripheral device connected to a host apparatus,  
comprising:

storage means for storing a plurality of Internet  
addresses corresponding to types of problems; and

25 output means for outputting an Internet address,  
which corresponds to a problem that has occurred, to

~~said host apparatus.~~

24. The peripheral device according to claim 23, wherein said peripheral device includes a printer, and said host apparatus includes a computer.

5 25. The peripheral device according to claim 23, wherein said output means outputs information indicative of the type of problem.

26. The peripheral device according to claim 23, wherein the problems include a problem which requires  
10 maintenance by a serviceman and a problem which can be eliminated by a user himself.

27. A host apparatus connected to a peripheral device, comprising:

input means for inputting, from the peripheral  
15 device, an Internet address corresponding to a problem that has occurred in said peripheral device; and

display means, which is connected to the Internet based upon the Internet address that has been input from said input means, for displaying a method of dealing  
20 with the problem.

28. The host apparatus according to claim 27, wherein said peripheral device includes a printer, and said host apparatus includes a computer.

29. The host apparatus according to claim 27, wherein  
25 the problems include a problem which requires maintenance by a serviceman and a problem which can be



~~eliminated by a user himself~~

30. The host apparatus according to claim 27, further comprising means for displaying the Internet address that has been input from said input means;

5        wherein if an Internet connection is specified by a user after the Internet address is displayed, said display means is connected to the Internet based upon the Internet address and is caused to display the method of dealing with the problem.

10       31. The host apparatus according to claim 27, wherein said input means inputs information, which is indicative of the type of problem, together with the Internet address corresponding to the problem that has occurred in said peripheral device; and

15       said display means is connected to the Internet based upon the Internet address that has been input by said input means and displays a method of dealing with the problem based upon the information indicative of the type of problem that has been input by said input means.

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